



PHARMACY SERVICES

Office of the Medical Director

Contact the Editor: OMD@dmh.lacounty.gov

The Pharmacy Connection

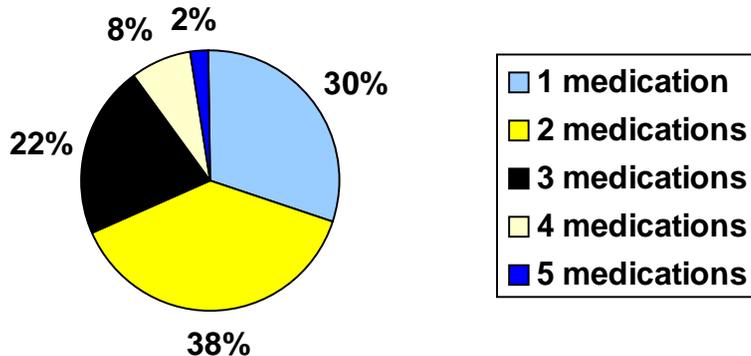
A forum for pharmacy related news and updates for DMH programs

August 16, 2011

A Message from the Medical Director, Roderick Shaner, M.D.

We know that medications are a critical tool for helping individuals in our care, and we have the evidence base to demonstrate this fact. The evidence base is still particularly weak, however, when it comes to the effectiveness of polypharmacy. We've all been trained to constantly work to limit medication to the minimum required for effective treatment. Over the last decade, DMH clinicians have made great strides in decreasing polypharmacy relative to other systems. The pie chart below shows where we stand.

Percentage of unique clients on 1 or more medications (excluding benzotropine)



Any use of excessive polypharmacy is particularly problematic for our system because it raises questions about the quality and safety of our practices, and about management of our limited resources. For these reasons, we must reasonably review decisions and clinical documentation for instances in which significant polypharmacy occurs, in order to demonstrate its necessity. We hope that all prescribers will constantly strive to limit polypharmacy and use our resources in the safest and most effective manner.

